

# Country of the Week: Niger

*Eunice Reddick, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Niger, has a special message for you:*

*Dear YALI Network Members,*

*Congratulations once again on being a part of the YALI Network. Niger has one of the world's youngest populations and programs like YALI are making the future brighter for this vibrant country which is brimming with potential.*

*Here in Niger, we are very enthusiastic supporters of the YALI community, currently 4,000 members strong in our country. Since its launch in Niger, we have had the privilege of sponsoring 23 Mandela Fellows and many participants in regional leadership events. Every time I have the opportunity to meet these young leaders, I am always impressed by their accomplishments and their commitment to peace, prosperity and creating opportunities for future generations.*

*There are so many examples of how YALI members are making a difference. In Diffa, the southeastern region which borders Nigeria and Chad, communities have been suffering from the consequences since 2015 of the attacks by Boko Haram. YALI members and others started the #DIFFA WE CARE social media movement. The objective is to help the children of Niger and those who have been displaced by Boko Haram attacks in neighboring countries and to raise awareness of the many humanitarian needs.*

*Across the country, our YALI members are also doing outstanding things, from inspiring young  people to work on environmental issues to challenging others to reflect on changing times through art and film. Others are involved in the digital space where new Apps and other inventions are changing the way people live their lives, interact with one another, make critical decisions and grow the country's prosperity.*

*YALI members also help one another by hosting conferences on leadership and entrepreneurship throughout the year. They conduct seminars that challenge one another to think innovatively about their country's future. Also, a recent Leadership Conduct lecture explored the nature of leadership and leadership ethics in the current business environment.*

*Although I could single out so many of our YALI members, two that come to mind are Amadou  Boukar and Aicha Macky. Amadou is a lawyer and president of the YALI Association in Niger. A rising star in public administration, he is enthusiastic about building bridges between the public and private sectors. His ZZ Collective is also an inspirational group which promotes entrepreneurship in Niamey by mentoring and working with Niger's fadas (youth groups). Amadou was a participant in the YALI 2016 Public Management Program at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia.*

*Another YALI alumni, Aicha Macky, is a prolific, award-winning film maker in Niger. Her latest film deals with infertility, a problem many Nigerian couples suffer in silence. Very active in helping women and families, Aicha Macky also recently volunteered to lead a book discussion with young high school girls on the empowering book, "I am Malala." Aicha attended Wagner University in New York for her YALI participation. *

*I could give many more examples of our YALI network members. As you can see, the network is going strong and always seeking new ways for members to participate. As leaders, I encourage you to continue being a part of YALI. We promise to keep you informed of all the activities available to network members and, from time to time, we may reach out to ask for your advice or special expertise. Please remember that you help inspire the next generation each time you get involved with a YALI program.*

*Also keep us informed of your successes. You can drop us an email or, better yet, write a social media post and tag it #YALINiger. We would love to help you celebrate all that you have done.*

*And speaking of social media, Niger is being featured as the YALI Network Country this week. I encourage you to take note of the inspiring work being done by your colleagues. This is also a great week for you to create your own YALI social media posts. Be sure to tag #YALINIGER and #YALINETWORK.*

*I look forward to keeping in contact with you. As always, thank you for being part of Niger's bright future.*

*Sincerely,*

*Eunice Reddick*

*U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Niger*

---

The Republic of Niger is a modern-day cultural crossroads born of diverse, prehistoric civilizations and ancient trading empires.

Today, over 80 percent of Niger is blanketed by the Sahara Desert in the north, and as a result, most of the population lives in the southern region dominated by rolling savannas. The climate is tempered by the beautiful Niger River — for which the country is named — and its unusual route flows across the landlocked nation throughout Western Africa in the shape of a boomerang, eventually spilling into the sea.

Reliance on subsistence agriculture paired with a growing population creates economic challenges of great concern to Nigeriens, and this week we're following the stories of three YALI Network members who strive to build a strong future for their country through entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and education.

Follow their lead, and get involved in your community by completing [YALI Network Online Courses](#) and by organizing [#YALILearns](#) events!

An alumnus of the Mandela Washington Fellowship program, [Daouda Hamadou](#) left his job as  an IT manager to create his own startup, Novatech, where he offers innovative and sustainable solutions to local problems using mobile technologies.

Daouda facilitates many leadership and business courses for dozens of young Nigeriens, sharing his own experiences learned from starting a business and managing teams. He uses helpful products and programs, such as YALI Network Online Courses, saying “Not only do these tools help my

company advance, but I am able to help other young people in my community.” Leading a team of four people, Daouda established a motivational and collaborative forum to grow important projects. “YALI Network resources help us achieve successful outcomes.”

With an additional focus on improving health, agriculture, and education, Daouda frequently holds discussion sessions with local farmers to increase production (pictured above), and he is currently working on a project that uses mobile phones to distribute helpful agricultural advice and information in local languages.

Join Daouda and YALI Network members like him by signing up using the form on the [YALI Network website](#). You’ll receive email updates, opportunities to collaborate with other young leaders, and access to [#YALILearns events](#)!

[Ayouba Abdou Sani](#) believes issues of climate change and civic engagement matter most in his home country of Niger. Determined to improve daily life for his community, Ayouba Abdou hosts [#YALILearns events](#) to explain the benefits of sustainable development. 

His efforts to create awareness around the harmful effects of climate change are vital to Niger’s future, and Ayouba Abdou knows that engaging women and youth is key to establishing long-term impact. He believes in fostering collaboration, explaining that engaging diverse groups is the best way to “preserve the environment and fight against climate change in Niger.”

After celebrating Earth Day with the U.S. Ambassador and fellow YALI Network members (photo above), Ayouba Abdou is further encouraged to “share my experiences and the wonderful work that my team and I continue to improve our home.”

Is climate change an important issue to you and your community? Find out how to get involved by liking the [YALI Network Facebook page](#) and [visiting the website](#), and complete the [YALI Network Understanding Climate Change course](#) today!

[Abdoul’Aziz Labo](#) understands the issues and problems many Nigeriens face living in rural areas. “The big issues are about rural exodus, education (especially girl schooling), and business development,” he says. 

Abdoul’Aziz understands these are intimidating problems, but with the YALI Network, he remains hopeful that he can work with others to improve Niger’s situation. The YALI Network gives Abdoul’Aziz the tools and training to “do something positive for my community.” In his work, he routinely encourages his neighbors to embrace business careers. In addition, he organizes meetings in his village to explain the roles that both parents and students must play in order to have a successful academic year. In particular, he encourages parents to send female students to school to receive the same education as male students.

“This powerful network helped me to get knowledge about big topics like climate change, human rights, the rights of women and girls, and entrepreneurship--all via online courses,” he explains. Abdoul’Aziz has not only received six certificates, he also he uses the knowledge he has gained to engage his community, providing free, accessible education for locals.

While he is excited to see positive change in his own life, he is even more excited to see positive

change for his home.

Our final featured #CountryoftheWeek members are Samira Ousmane Mamoudou and  Housseini Ahssimi Mamadou.

[Samira Ousmane Mamoudou](#) radiates ambition and determination as a businesswoman who created her own fashion design and textile production company. She is passionate about empowering marginalized women and girls in Niger. Samira is also passionate about supporting African businesses and uses source materials exclusively from African producers despite the affordability and accessibility of European and Asian materials. Although she is focused on her business and product development, she finds time to mentor young girls, leading a networking group for women interested in business. Samira attended the University of Texas in Austin for her YALI grant.

[Housseini Ahssimi Mamadou](#) is a communications manager at Niger's only business incubator, [CIPMEN](#). Housseini is dedicated to using his technological skills for improving the public sector and enhancing public administration in his country. He uses his skills and knowledge to serve his community, and he hopes to inspire and create a network of young social entrepreneurs in Niger.

 Even before receiving his grant, he volunteered with the YALI Niger Alumni Association (#YALINiger) to develop and disseminate a mobile elections monitoring app, organized "code week" in Niger, and provided regular free workshops for young people who are interested in technology. Housseini attended Arizona State University for his YALI grant in 2016.

---

*Chers membres du YALI Network,*

*Je tiens à vous féliciter, une fois de plus, de faire partie du YALI Network. La population du Niger est l'une des plus jeunes du monde, et les programmes comme YALI donnent un avenir encore plus brillant à ce pays dynamique et qui regorge de potentiel.*

*Ici, au Niger, nous sommes de fervents supporters de la communauté YALI, forte actuellement de 4 000 membres dans notre pays. Depuis le lancement de ce programme au Niger, nous avons eu le privilège de parrainer 23 Mandela Fellows et de nombreux participants à des événements régionaux sur le thème du leadership. Chaque fois que j'ai l'occasion de rencontrer ces jeunes leaders, je suis impressionnée par leurs réalisations et par leur attachement à la paix, à la prospérité et à la création d'opportunités pour les générations suivantes.*

*Les membres de YALI font bouger les choses, et ce ne sont pas les exemples qui manquent. Dans la région de Diffa, située dans le sud-est du Niger à la frontière avec le Nigeria et le Tchad, la population subit encore les conséquences des attaques menées en 2015 par Boko Haram. Des membres de YALI font partie de ceux qui ont lancé le mouvement #DiffaWeCare sur les réseaux sociaux. Leur objectif est de venir en aide aux enfants du Niger comme à ceux qui ont été déplacés dans les pays voisins par les attaques de Boko Haram, et aussi de sensibiliser le public à l'ampleur des besoins humanitaires.*

À travers le pays, nos membres de YALI accomplissent des tâches extraordinaires, qu'ils  incitent les jeunes à se mobiliser pour les questions de l'environnement ou qu'ils les invitent à partager leurs réflexions sur les changements de leur époque par le biais des arts et du cinéma. D'autres se concentrent sur l'espace numérique, où les nouvelles applis et d'autres inventions sont en train de changer la façon de vivre des gens, leurs interactions, la manière dont ils prennent des décisions importantes et les moyens à leur disposition pour accroître la prospérité du pays.

Les membres de YALI s'entraident aussi en organisant des conférences sur le leadership et l'entrepreneuriat tout au long de l'année. Ils tiennent des séminaires qui donnent l'occasion à leurs membres de réfléchir à l'avenir du pays sous un angle novateur. Récemment, une conférence a examiné la nature du leadership et son code d'éthique dans le climat actuel des affaires.

Je pourrais, bien sûr, citer nommément un grand nombre de nos membres de YALI, mais je m'en tiendrai à deux noms : Amadou Boukar et Aïcha Macky. Amadou est avocat et président de l'Association YALI au Niger. Étoile montante de l'administration publique, il œuvre avec enthousiasme à la création de ponts entre les secteurs public et privé. Il a aussi fondé le Collectif ZZ, un groupe qui cherche à susciter et à promouvoir l'entrepreneuriat à Niamey en offrant du mentorat aux jeunes et en collaborant avec les Fadas. Dans le cadre de YALI 2016, Amadou a participé au Programme de gestion publique à la Georgia State University, à Atlanta. 

Issue également du programme YALI, Aïcha Macky est une cinéaste prolifique et primée du Niger. Son dernier film explore le sujet de l'infertilité, un problème dont souffrent en silence de nombreux couples nigériens. Aïcha Macky déploie aussi de grands efforts pour aider les femmes et les familles. Elle a récemment mené, en bénévole, une discussion sur le livre *Moi, Malala* à l'intention de jeunes lycéennes, sur le thème de l'autonomisation. Dans le cadre de sa participation à YALI, Aïcha a fait des études à l'université Wagner, à New York.

Je pourrais vous donner bien plus d'exemples sur nos membres du YALI Network. Comme vous pouvez le constater, le réseau est dynamique et cherche toujours à donner à ses membres de nouvelles façons d'y participer. Vous êtes des leaders, et je vous encourage à continuer à faire partie de YALI. Nous promettons de vous tenir au courant de toutes les activités mises à la disposition des membres du Network et, de temps en temps, nous ferons appel à vos conseils ou à votre savoir-faire particulier. N'oubliez jamais que vous contribuez à inspirer la génération suivante chaque fois que vous participez à un programme de YALI.

Et tenez-nous au courant de vos succès. Envoyez-nous un courriel ou, encore mieux, rédigez un  billet de blog sur l'un des réseaux sociaux en utilisant le tag #YALINiger. Nous aurons grand plaisir à célébrer avec vous toutes vos réalisations.

Et puisqu'il est question de réseaux sociaux, je note que le Niger est le pays mis à l'honneur cette semaine par le YALI Network. Je vous encourage tous à prendre note des actions édifiantes de vos collègues. Cette semaine est donc le moment idéal de poster sur les réseaux sociaux. N'oubliez pas d'utiliser les hashtags #YALINIGER et #YALINETWORK.

Rester en contact avec vous sera un plaisir pour moi. Et comme toujours, merci de faire partie de l'avenir brillant du Niger.

Cordialement,

*Eunice Reddick*  
*Ambassadrice des États-Unis auprès*  
*de la République du Niger*

---